



- News
- Feature Focus
- Celebrate
- Conference News
- Local Church News
- Lifting Up...
- NEWS Archives
- SEC News Resources

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- Who is the SEC?
- Who is the UCC?
- How Do I Find a UCC Church?
- What Ministries are Available?
- Is Training Available?

YOU ARE HERE: [HOME](#) ► [CONFERENCE NEWS](#) ► [KIRKWOOD AND MISSION 1:11](#)

Kirkwood and Mission 1:11



New Atlanta Church Dares to Embrace Big Mission:1 Goals

Written by Gregg Brekke | November 3, 2011

Atlanta's Kirkwood UCC has taken on the Mission:1 challenge with passion, outreach, education and a dare.

Recently received as a new United Church of Christ congregation with full standing in the Southeast Conference, Kirkwood UCC isn't resting on this recent milestone of the church.

"We decided to add an extra Soup Saturday meal during Mission:1," says Kirkwood member Amy Rush of the church's twice monthly community meal. "It's a chance for us to meet people from our neighborhood — around 25 each week."



In addition to the meal, Kirkwood also offers guests the opportunity to "shop" for warm and new clothes, and receive supplies from the church's food pantry, on Soup Saturdays.

Kirkwood UCC kids from the James family gather around the 30+ food items they are donating to Mission:1 efforts. (Photo left)

Rush says that six additional volunteers have begun working at Soup Saturdays. This is over half way toward the congregation's goal of having 11 new workers in the outreach

ministry.

With Mission:1 as the backdrop to many outreach and giving opportunities, Rush says that Kirkwood members caught the spirit and began daring one another to up their donation ante.

"One person posted on our Facebook page that she could bring 30 items and challenged others to do the same," says Rush. "Someone then posted that she'd bring 30+1 and I posted that I'd bring 30+2. I believe the latest pledge was 45 items. We're well on our way to our goal of 1,111 healthy food items for our own Community Table Food Pantry."

The church's goal of \$211 toward the Neighbors in Need offering has already been exceeded by an anonymous donation of \$1,111. "Isn't that fantastic?" exclaims Rush.

But Kirkwood members have also embraced advocacy and education as key elements of their Mission:1 goals.

On Nov. 8, Kirkwood UCC will join Praxis UCC of Atlanta to host an Oxfam Hunger Banquet. Attendees will bring 11 food items or donate \$11 toward the churches' shared Mission:1 goals in addition to working toward completing 51 pledged letters to Congress.

The group will also show two documentaries to accompany the meal: Silent Killer - The Unfinished Campaign Against Hunger and Chicken a la Cart.

"It has become clearer and clearer that, at least for our community, food is a HUGE issue — having enough food to sustain a person and having healthy food to eat," says the Rev. Susannah Davis, pastor of Kirkwood UCC. "We are so

thankful to be a part of the UCC. Dreams and visions like Mission:1 gather us all in and give us opportunity to share the best of who we are and who God is calling us to be!"

From Nov. 1-11, 2011 (11-1-11—11-11-11), the UCC's goals are to collect more than 1 million food and household items for local food banks, as well as \$111,111 in online donations for hunger-related ministries and \$111,111 in online donations for East Africa famine relief. The UCC also is asking its 5,300 congregations to advocate for hunger-related causes worldwide via 11,111 letters to Congress.

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| « < December 2011 > » |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S                     | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
| 27                    | 28 | 29 | 30 | 1  | 2  | 3  |
| 4                     | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 |
| 11                    | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18                    | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25                    | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

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